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UNCLAS BAGHDAD 003792

SIPDIS

DOT FOR FAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GLOBAL RESUMES NORMAL OPERATIONS AT BAGHDAD AIRPORT

1. (U) Summary: Following GOI assurances of partial payment of \$12.5 million on claimed arrears, Global Risk Securities (GRS) resumed full operations at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) at 0600 hours September 10. All flights - civilian, commercial, and military - are operating normally. Post received verification that the payment was made September 13, clearing the way for Global and the Ministry of Transportation (MOT) to begin negotiations on the remaining arrears and a future contract. End summary.

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Background  
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2. (U) On September 9 at 0600 hours, Global Risk Strategies suspended its operations at BIAP, effectively closing the airport to all civil and commercial flights. The military side of the airport remained open to military flights and pre-selected civil reconstruction flights on a priority basis.

3. (U) Global has been working at BIAP since February of 2005 without a signed contract. It had received no payment for its services from the GOI since then until September 13 in spite of repeated promises from MOT. Global claims it is owed \$23 million in arrears and is demanding a new contract within 10 days.

4. (U) During Global's operations stand-down, the MNF-I at BIAP raised its security posture and was ready to take over the perimeter and checkpoint security stations. The civilian terminal was closed and pre-selected reconstruction flights diverted to the military runway. USAF air traffic controllers operated the tower during this period. Global employees remained at their security posts throughout the stand-down, but closed BIAP checkpoints to the public and halted all passenger screening and processing operations in the BIAP civilian terminal.

5. (SBU) Global raised the matter with Deputy Prime Minister Chalabi, who, in collaboration with the Minister of Finance and U.S. Embassy personnel, reached the settlement leading to the partial payment of arrears to Global and its resumption of operations.

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Current Situation  
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6. (U) Post has received verification that the wire transfer for the partial payment of \$12.5 million did go through September 13. Now Global will try to set a date to begin negotiations with the MOT to resolve Global's outstanding claims and reach an agreement on a new contract. Chalabi has said at least four security companies are interested in providing security services at BIAP.

Satterfield